

## BRIEFS

### ANGLICAN SYNOD VOTE CONDEMNED

YORK, England (BP) — A global group of conservative Anglicans has decried the Church of England General Synod's July 9 affirmation of transgender lifestyles and its disapproval of homosexual conversion therapy. "False teaching is restless and relentless, and the Church of England itself is in grave spiritual danger," Nicolas Okoh, chairman of the Primates Council of the Global Anglican Future Conference and a Nigerian archbishop, wrote in his July pastoral letter.

### DISASTER RELIEF DIRECTOR NAMED

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Sam Porter, volunteer missions specialist at the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, has been named the new national director for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief by the North American Mission Board. He will replace Mickey Caison, who will officially retire Aug. 31. Porter has led more than 100 volunteer mission projects and over 40 international relief missions. He has headed the Oklahoma convention's earthquake recovery efforts in Haiti, and served as a chaplain in the morgue at Ground Zero after the 9-11 terrorist attack in New York City that resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths.

### MODERATE GROUP CEASES OPERATION

HOUSTON (BP) — Texas Baptists Committed (TBC), formed in the 1980s to promote moderate principles and leadership within the Baptist General Convention of Texas, has announced it will cease operations at the end of July. "Funds have been tight at TBC at least since I first joined the board in January 2006," said TBC executive director Bill Jones. "With no visible 'battle' for control of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, as there was through most of the 1990s, many Baptists just haven't felt the urgent need for a 'watchdog' like Texas Baptists Committed. 'Battle fatigue' was a factor, too."

## Baptists lay hands on President

### Mainstream news media find action 'very strange'

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Participants in an impromptu prayer meeting that broke out July 10 in the Oval Office of U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C., have described the experience as keeping with Scripture's command to pray for government leaders.

Members of the mainstream news media, however, criticized the gathering and at least one cable reporter termed as "very strange" the laying of hands on the president during a prayer for his leadership and safety.

According to news media reports, some 30 evangelical leaders were involved in the meeting.

"I prayed for protection for the president and vice president as well as their families," said Ronnie Floyd, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention and senior pastor of multi-campus Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, in written comments to Baptist Press (BP).

"I asked God to provide for them His wisdom in all decision-making, helping them to see things like God sees them. I then appealed to God to lead them forward into the future as our



**PRAYING FOR PREZ** — Evangelical leaders who are part of U.S. President Donald Trump's Faith Leaders Initiative lay hands on the President July 10 as they pray for him in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. (BP photo courtesy of Johnnie Moore)

see MEDIA on p. 7

## 'Message' author clarifies interview

NASHVILLE (BP) — Eugene Peterson, known for authoring *The Message*, a widely-read paraphrase of Scripture, in hot water over recent pro-homosexual remarks, is seeking to clarify his beliefs and has said he affirms "a biblical view of marriage" and would not perform a same sex wedding.



**PETERSON**

In a July 13 statement released by his agent Rick Christian, Peterson said he "would like to retract" a statement published the previous day by Religion News Service (RNS) that reported he said he would perform a same sex wedding if asked to do so. He also appeared to indicate in the RNS interview that he did not regard homosexual acts as inherently sinful.

Christian wrote in an introduction to Peterson's July 13 statement that the 84-year-old author "would like to clarify and change."

see AUTHOR on p. 4

## Samford drops Ala. Baptist funding

Birmingham, Ala. (BP) — Samford University in Birmingham, described as Alabama Baptists' "crown jewel," will no longer receive annual budget allocations from the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) after 2017.

As of Jan. 1, 2018, the three-million-dollar-plus Cooperative Program (CP) allotment for Samford will be reduced from Alabama's CP budget, assuming the request to eliminate funding for Samford is approved by the State Board of Missions (SBOM) and convention messengers.

This was a voluntary action taken by the school, Samford officials said on July 7. The school's board of trustees executive committee approved the decision June 27 as a result of an ongoing dialogue among the senior leaders of Samford and ABSC.

The dialogue revolved around tensions concerning a proposed student organization, Samford Together, whose stated purpose is to facilitate discussion of topics related to human sexuality.

The Samford Relationship Study Group was appointed to work out concerns between the state convention and its 175-year-old educational institution. The group consists of the three state convention officers and the immediate past president, the SBOM chairman and vice chairman, and the SBOM executive director.

ABSC and SBOM leadership see the student group as more than a discussion group and are concerned it is an LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender)-oriented organization, officials noted.

Concerns were publicly expressed through a joint statement from ABSC President John Thweatt and SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance and later affirmed and approved by State Board trustees. Those concerns were the basis for A Call to Prayer by Thweatt.

Samford President Andrew Westmoreland said in a news release that the intent and purposes of the proposed student organization were widely misunderstood, but even before being notified by convention officials that there could be financial consequences if the group was officially recognized by Samford, Westmoreland confirmed he had determined not to seek formal recognition of the proposed student organization by trustees.

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### A real whodunit

**G**eof Pender, political editor at the *Clarion Ledger* newspaper in Jackson, may not consider himself a mystery writer but he's managed to whip up quite a whopper in that age-old category. He begins his July 15 column on [clarionledger.com](http://clarionledger.com) thusly:

*Did the Mississippi Legislature approve what could be the largest expansion of gambling in 25 years either inadvertently or through sleight of hand, without the leadership realizing it?*

What for? In Pender's mystery masterpiece would be my satisfaction to lovers of that genre, if only it was fiction. It's not.

It seems Pender has uncovered the sneaky, back-door manner in which fantasy sports gambling will be legitimized in Mississippi, much like the subterfuge used during the unsuccessful attempt to slip a lottery bill through the 2007 regular legislative session earlier this year.

Fantasy sports gambling is an internet-based enterprise in which gamblers use computers to select a team of real athletes that compete in, say for example, the National Football League. For a fee (of course), gamblers can cheer on their athletes in the real games taking place and hope their chosen athletes do well enough to earn the gamblers a nice return on their money — just like any other gambling operation.

Mississippi's Attorney General Jim Hood, a Democrat, issued a legal opinion in 2010 that fantasy sports gambling in the state is illegal. When the well-established gambling/political complex read Hood's opinion, they knew something had to be done and quickly.

The reason for their panic is because they are betting on a pending case before the U.S. Supreme Court dealing with a fantasy sports gambling ban imposed in the State of New Jersey. Court watchers have said they are confident the justices will strike down the New Jersey law as unconstitutional, which would clear the way for fantasy sports gambling nationwide and nullify the Mississippi attorney general's legal opinion.

The Mississippi gambling/political complex intends to take full advantage of any Supreme Court ruling that goes their way, so they rallied to have legislators pass and the governor sign House Bill 967, also known by its euphemistic short title of "Fantasy Contest Act."

Now, bear in mind that Mississippi currently has a batch of legislators who

could not complete their work in the regular session earlier this year and had to be called back into special session at tremendous taxpayer expense to handle the responsibilities they failed to handle during the regular session.

Yet they found the will and the means to swiftly address the attorney general's legal opinion on fantasy sports gambling and bypass it, all in a matter of mere months after Hood released it.

Here's the part that makes this mystery a best-seller: Pender could find no politician involved with House Bill 967 who wanted to take credit for it or seemed to understand how it came to pass.

"I have serious concerns about the negative consequences of betting on sports," said Republican Governor Phil Bryant in a statement quoted by Pender — but Bryant still signed House Bill 967 into law.

"As is often the case, different lawyers have different interpretations on whether the changes made, whether intentional or not, have any implications on other types of gaming in our state," Laura Hipp, spokesperson for Lt. Governor Tate Reeves, told Pender. *Huh?*

Phillip Gunn, Republican speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives and former elder at Morrison Heights Church in Clinton, has expressed strong opposition to fantasy sports gambling — but Pender said he voted for House Bill 967 anyway.

Gunn's spokesperson Meghan Annison didn't elaborate specifically on the speaker's vote, telling Pender only, "We'll have to take a look at this in more detail."

Pender also wrote that Republican Richard Bennett of Long Beach, the House Gaming Committee chairman who wrote the bill and shepherded it through the legislature, could not be reached for comment. That mirrors The Baptist Record's attempts to contact him.

Mississippi is sorely in need to leadership in the area of legalized gambling. Some of the most addictive behaviors known to mankind have been slipped into Mississippi citizens' lives and families by men and women elected to look after our best interests. Gambling, in any form, is not in anyone's best interest.

Ask your legislator whether he/she is in favor of addicting more Mississippians and destroying more of our state's families. Listen closely to the answer, and then pray about what needs to be done.

## One of these days...

**I** took our 10-year-old daughter to a Texas Rangers baseball game a few weeks ago. Just the two of us. Our other three children were home with my wife. For nearly four hours, we spent time together in the car and at the stadium. My phone stayed in my pocket except for taking and posting a few photos.

The value of that time at the game was priceless. Had it not been for a letter our 12-year-old, our oldest daughter, penned to my mother, this moment would never have happened. Back in November, as the kids were making out their Christmas wish lists, she wrote a letter asking my parents to buy me season tickets to the Texas Rangers for Christmas.

Her motives were pure. She knew how much I loved watching the Rangers on television. We went to a few games last season and loved every minute. The final reason that tugged at our heartstrings was when she said she missed being able to go with me to a game — just the two of us — and spend time together.

This season I started the summer-long goal of taking each of my four children to at least one baseball game, by ourselves.

Our second daughter was overjoyed about the opportunity to go first. She has a memory of getting a ball at the game that will never fade. I even stopped on the way home at 10 p.m. to get ice cream — something only a dad would do. Most of all, we simply spent time together.

We talked. We listened. We slowed down.

If your family life is anything like ours, you are busy. Between work, school, church, sports practices, and countless other activities, it can be difficult to slow down and enjoy being in the presence of our children. However, my oldest daughter's letter and my second daughter's joy demonstrate that we often forget the value of time.

They simply enjoyed being with me and having my attention.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-7, we read, "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."



### Guest opinion with Evan Lenow

How can we teach our children the words of the Lord if we do not take the time to have conversations with them and listen to their hearts?

For our family, the cure for slowing down is baseball. We love watching the games and acting as if we know the players well. However, watching the sport live gives us an opportunity we rarely get with other activities — uninterrupted time talking. We can sit and watch the game while also having a three-hour conversation.

For you, the activity may be different. You may enjoy gardening, working in the yard, hunting, fishing, or another activity. Why not involve your children so that you can spend invaluable time with them and hear what is on their hearts?

Training children in the ways of God is an essential part of parenting. King Solomon stopped to remind his son to listen to his instructions (Proverbs 1:8; 2:1-2; 3:1-2; 4:1-2, 10, 20; 5:1-2; 6:20-21; 7:1-3, 24; 8:32-34).

In our fast-paced world, we lose sight of the fact that we need to slow down to teach our children. We need to put our cell phones away and invest time in our children's lives.

One of these days, they will no longer be in our homes and that valuable time will be gone. Let us not waste it.

Lenow (@evanlenow) is associate professor of ethics at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, director of the seminary's Center for Biblical Stewardship, and director of the seminary's Richard Land Center for Cultural Engagement. This column first appeared on [theologicalmatters.com](http://theologicalmatters.com), and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and length.

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# 'Annie's Church' may be sold over water bill

**BALTIMORE (BP)** — Ryan Palmer is confident he'll be able to save historic Seventh Metro Church from a developer attempting to buy the property for pennies or the dollar through a city auction.



PALMER

Seventh Metro Church has significance as the site of Southern Baptist missionary Annie Armstrong's baptism in 1869. She is the namesake of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

The City of Baltimore auctioned the church in 2016 through a contested system that allows the city to place tax liens on homes, businesses, and tax-exempt churches to recover outstanding water bills.

At issue for Seventh Metro Church are a \$1,000 water bill and the tax lien auction procedure, both of which Palmer is contesting. The bivocational pastor and practicing attorney told Baptist Press the water bill has accumulated due to leaky pipes, and said the tax lien system is against the law.

"It is unrecognizable that 20 people could incur a \$6,000 water bill, meeting two hours a week on 52 Sundays and midweek Bible study," Palmer told Baptist Press. "We are not only contesting the water bill, but we are also contesting the unlawful practice that is going on here in Baltimore."

"According to the IRS Code, a church is treated as a tax exempt entity," Palmer said. "A water bill

is not a tax. An environmental citation is not a tax. Therefore, it should be unlawful to convert a water bill or a citation into a tax lien and use the tax to take property from a nontaxable entity."

In the meantime, a California developer identified as Christopher Bryan has already bought the debt and has bid \$53,000 on the property assessed at \$1.4 million, the Baltimore Sun reported in May.

Palmer is determined for the congregation to retain the property, commonly referred to as "Annie's Church." It was constructed in 1845 and rebuilt after a 1919 fire.

"Truthfully," Palmer told BP, "we have every confidence that we will be able to redeem the property."

Palmer is working through public and governmental channels to raise funds, and said June 30 he was only \$3,000 away from the money he needs to satisfy the \$6,000 debt plus potential interest and legal fees. He has established a GoFundMe page, is accepting direct gifts, and hopes to raise an additional \$11,500 to repair leaky pipes and subsequent water damage.

"We are actively seeking public dollars and grants to assist us in our mission," Palmer said. "Please keep us in prayer."

Seventh Metro Church is one of several churches the City of Baltimore has auctioned for unpaid bills, the Baltimore Sun reported May 27. In the past three years the same California developer, Bryan, has purchased liens on at least 26 predominantly African American churches through the city's annual tax auction, the Sun said.

In May, Bryan was pursuing foreclosure on at least six church-

es, and had already taken ownership of one, the newspaper said.

Various property owners, city council members, and state legislators have criticized the tax lien system as unfair, the Sun reported. The water billing system itself is problematic, according to Baltimore-area news reports as early as five years ago.

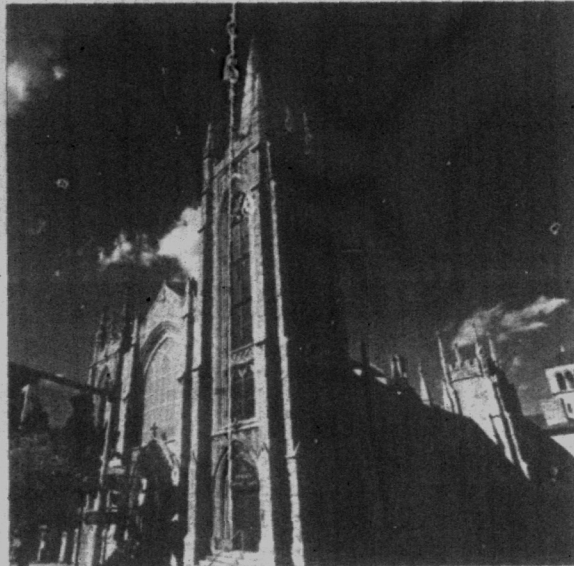
After an audit revealed widespread billing errors the city announced plans to issue \$4.2 million in refunds to 38,000 water customers, CBS Baltimore reported in March, 2012. At that time, 2,300 property owners were at risk of losing their homes, the CBS affiliate said.

The city reportedly revamped its billing system, installed digital meters, and increased the number of meter readers but complaints have continued.

In a June 23 editorial in the Baltimore Sun, Maryland Delegate Mary L. Washington urged the city to discontinue water bill tax sales and establish a water affordability program. While related legislative bills Washington introduced in the most recent session failed, legislators created a Task Force on Tax Sales to examine the current system and create statewide reforms.

"Pushed by investors, laws have been created that have morphed tax sales into a predatory system of debt collection where \$350 water bill delinquencies turn into \$5,500 debts or more," Washington wrote. "The most recent announcement by the city that rates will increase again this summer is especially disturbing."

Palmer is working with legislators, churches, and organizations to contest the water-bill-based tax sales, he told BP.



SEVENTH METRO CHURCH

He began leading Seventh Metro Church in 2003 when its membership had dwindled to 17. Membership rose to 50 early in his pastorate, but has fallen again as he struggles without support staff to minister to the community.

Amid the tax lien controversy, Palmer continues to explore new avenues to make the church more relevant and to utilize the church campus he describes as "in amazing condition."

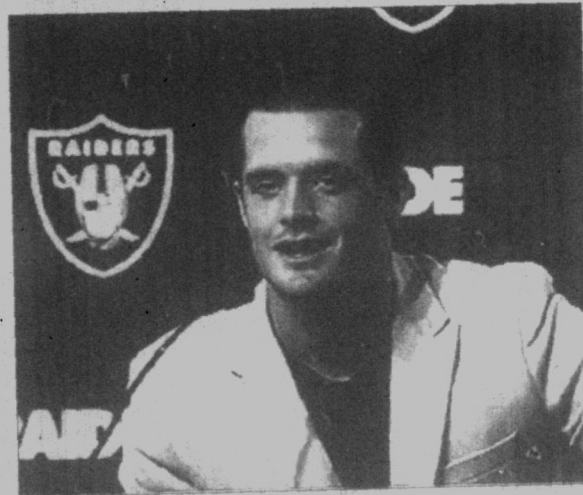
"Although there are occasional leaks in our aging slate roof, the bricks and mortar are outstanding," Palmer told BP. "We are turning our attention to the part-

nering and programming that need to take place after we redeem the property."

He has assembled a team of community representatives outside the church membership to advise him on using the campus to meet the needs of college students, artists, and professionals.

He's planning a Centre City Arts Academy in cooperation with numerous groups including, he said, the Central Baltimore Partnership, the Jubilee Baltimore neighborhood development group, Johns Hopkins University, the Maryland Institute College of Art, and the University of Baltimore.

## NFL elite quarterback gives glory, tithe to God



DEREK CARR

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — When Oakland Raiders quarterback Derek Carr signed a contract extension making him the highest paid player in National League Football history, he was quick to identify one of his top priorities: tithing.

"The first thing I'll do is I'll pay my tithe like I have since I was in college getting \$700 on a scholarship check. That won't change," Carr said at a June 23 press conference following the signing.

Carr and the Raiders agreed to a five-year, \$125 million extension that will keep him in silver and black through 2022.

"First and foremost, I'm just blessed and honored to be sitting here today," Carr said in his opening comments at the press conference. "I dreamed of this day when I was a little kid, and it's here. I just thank God for this opportunity."

An outspoken Christian, Carr said he was excited about

the contract because he wanted to continue playing for the Raiders, and because of how he and his wife Heather would use the money.

"This money's going to help a lot of people," he said. "I'm very thankful to have it, that it's in our hands, because it's going to help people not only in this country but in a lot of countries around the world. That's what's exciting to me."

The Raiders drafted Carr out of Fresno State University in California in the second round of the 2014 draft. In three seasons with the team, Carr has established himself as one of the league's elite passers. In 2016, he led Oakland to a 12-4 record with 3,937 passing yards, 28 touchdowns, and only six interceptions.

Though he grew up in a Christian home, it wasn't until college that Carr began to take his faith seriously; thanks main-

ly to a letter he received from Heather. They were just friends at the time, but Heather confronted Carr about his profession of faith that didn't match up with his actions.

"He would say one thing but act the opposite way," Heather said in a video produced by The Increase, an organization that shares the Christian testimonies of professional athletes. "He was talking about God and how much he loved God, and then I would see him going to the parties, hanging out with the girls."

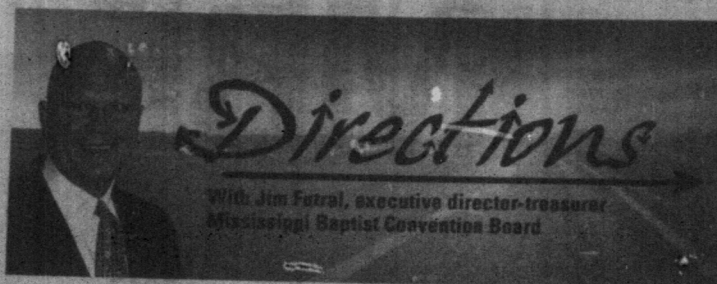
That letter from Heather was a wake-up call to Carr. He repented of the way he had been living, told his teammates that he had done a poor job of living the Christian life, and pledged to be a better example to them going forward.

"I am first and foremost a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each time I step out on the field I play my heart out for the Lord."

I was in a store the other day and country music was playing. A song came on that I had not heard in a long, long time so I tuned in and listened to it. It was the song, Feed Jake! It's a ballad by the Pirates of the Mississippi who sing about the troubles, trials, and tests of life. In the refrain the man tells his wife, "If I should die before I wake, feed Jake." The point of the song is there are things beyond us that we want to have taken care of, so take care of my old, faithful, good dog Jake.

I was reflecting on that interesting little ole country song and I thought about the king found in the book of Isaiah named Hezekiah. You may remember that in Isaiah 38, Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah to tell him that he was going to die and that he should set his house in order. Hezekiah was sick, sick, sick, and he turned his face toward the wall and cried out to God to give him healing and life. Sure enough, God heard him and gave him fifteen more years to live. Those 15 more years were basically filled with time but not much productivity. He even heard from Isaiah that there were going to be bad things taking place in some areas of the country or other countries and Hezekiah wanted to know, well, how's it going to be with me? Isaiah 39:8 records, "Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days." Hezekiah did not seem to be worried about anybody else. He was worried about himself and that the days he had left would be peaceful and good. He wasn't worried beyond that time.

Here's the fact: Every one of us can take care of some things beyond us and probably ought to give thought to what needs to be done in what areas even



## Feed Jake

after we're gone. As a general rule most of us think when we're gone, we're gone and there's nothing we can do to make any difference in the world beyond us, but that is not true. The Book of Revelation tells us that their works do follow people, and the people of God can leave in motion things that will impact the next generation and maybe generations to come if we would just give consideration to what needs to be done. Think for a moment about some areas where you can make a difference even after you are gone.

**Think about individuals.** A good man after he is gone can have an impact on his family and maybe even a circle much larger than that because of the preparations he had in place when he left. Every one of us should be concerned about our family members, our children, and our children's children. We should think about people who maybe in life we were never able to get everything done or said that

would make a difference in their lives, but when you die, you can leave a mark that truly will make a difference. Maybe there are individuals about whom you need to think beyond your departure from this land because you can impact them and even like Abel being dead, you can still speak.

**Think also about the difference you can make not just with individuals but with institutions.** You can be a part of a large work, a great work, a work that is not possible to be done by one person, but one person can make a difference in that work. Institutions are that way, and there are many who have made tremendous differences in people's lives beyond their life. Think about institutions like colleges and universities, hospitals, the Baptist Children's Village, special institutional needs where you can ensure part of your life is invested in the life of that institution. In a sense you would feeding Jake.

A last thought that I would give you is that in order to carry out something beyond yourself you might look at individuals, institutions, or ideas. Have you ever thought about the investment you can make in the perpetuation of great ideas — theological ideas, biblical ideas, the proclamation of the word of God, the spread of the Gospel — and those ideas stretching long after you cannot speak on your own? What an incredible act to invest part of your life into something that will go to help the Gospel forever to be preached, sung, taught, lived.

I think about the ideas in our country, the ideas and principles on which our country was founded, those wonderful concepts that made up the beginning days and the continuing days of our country: liberty, the value of each person under God, the rule of law, the freedoms we enjoy. All were ideas put in place that affect us every day put in place by someone else, someone who thought about feeding Jake.

It's a biblical truth and a truth that can make a difference in your life, not only now but even thinking about when you're not here because you can make a difference in people's lives. You can make a difference in the kingdom of God. The old country song about a man with a dog that needed to be cared for after he was gone carries weight to our hearts to say not only do what you can do for the Lord today but do what you can to put in place the continuation of the Kingdom work far beyond your life, your voice, your influence. In fact, your care will still be there. Feed Jake.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

### AUTHOR

cont. from p. 1

his response" to questions on homosexuality.

In his clarification Peterson wrote, "I affirm a biblical view of marriage: one man to one woman. I affirm a biblical view of everything."

Peterson added he would not perform a same sex wedding out of respect to the congregation, the larger church body, and the historic biblical Christian view and teaching on marriage. That said, I would still love such a couple as their pastor. They'd be welcome at my table, along with everybody else."

LifeWay Christian Resources announced July 13 that the Southern Baptist-owned publishing house in Nashville would continue to sell Peterson resources.

Although a popular item, The Message has drawn its share of criticism. John R. Kohlenberger III of the Christian Research Institute in Charlotte, N.C., points out The Message is a paraphrase — not a translation — of the Bible, and he wrote in the Christian Research Journal in 1994, "The major problem with this kind of paraphrase... is that the reader does not know where the text ends and the commentary begins."

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BM SPAENYAX DRUC QCD.

ZBPMU SAUAP CRA: ULARUQ-ZBKA

Clue: D = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 1:10

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## MS POSITIONS

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IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please email resumes to [enonbaptistchurch@outlook.com](mailto:enonbaptistchurch@outlook.com) or US mail to ENON Baptist Church 2604 Carrolton Rd. Grenada, MS 38901 Attn: Jerry Bovette 662-614-9381.

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH MENDENHALL, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Robert Mangum, Chairman — Pastor Search Committee, 115 Pine Circle, Mendenhall, MS 39114

## CLASSIFIEDS

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A MINISTER OF MUSIC AND MISSIONS. Candidate must be skilled in leading worship that is both theologically sound and done well, whether traditional or contemporary. Choral leading experience needed; some instrumental skill preferred. For more information, or to submit a resume, feel free to email us at [musicministrysearch@fellowshipbaptist.org](mailto:musicministrysearch@fellowshipbaptist.org)

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## THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Foundation News • Summer 2017

### cemetery / n. / cem·e·tery / 'se-mə-, ter-ē, - , te-rē

Cemetery (n.) — 1) A place where the remains of dead people are buried or otherwise interred. 2) The word "cemetery" signifies land that is specifically designated as a burial ground. 3) Early Christian writers were the first to use this term for "burial ground" though the Greek word (κοιμητήριον = "sleeping place") has ancient use in reference to the "sleep of death." Jesus used this word when describing Lazarus as being "asleep" in John 11:11-13. Paul defined the death of a Christian as being "asleep" as he employed the term three times in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to underscore the hope available through Christ Jesus.

Daniel C. Hall Executive Director, MBF

While I must admit that my daily plans do not include a visit to a local cemetery, I have visited many cemeteries through the years while attending or officiating at the burial of church members, friends, or loved ones. I also have observed that some folks "take their exercise" by walking along the roads and paths that wind through and around the cemetery. Walkers can enjoy the serenity and beauty that accompanies a well-maintained cemetery. (Plus, no one will criticize them for talking to themselves or singing off-key while they walk.) I have realized from these personal visits and observations that a cemetery is a unique place in several ways.

A cemetery is a unique place of **Memory**. A husband visiting the grave of his wife remembers decades of life shared with the one to whom was pledged "til death do us part." Parents who visit the grave of their child who died through illness, tragic accident, or military service remember birthdays, Christmas mornings, the first day of school, and ballgames. Children visiting the graves of their parents may recall sacrifices of time and other resources, or examples of integrity and fair dealing with people. Children may also reflect on words of encouragement, instruction, and parental wisdom.

From personal experience, I know that floods of memories wash over the visitor when standing at the family burial plot reading and re-reading the words on the headstone. Certain memories are sure to bring a smile to the visitor's face or even a chuckle. Other memories may cause one's eyes to fill with tears. Regardless of the emotion and response derived from the visit, a cemetery is a place of memory.

Beyond the personal memories, a cemetery is a unique place of **Mystery**. Many questions may be answered and pieces to genealogical puzzles can be discovered through a visit to a cemetery. Because they reveal a great deal of history and insight into the local area and culture, cemeteries have a mysterious way of

making connections with the past.

In fact, a cemetery is a museum of sorts complete with nuggets of information about individuals who lived in the past. Some of these lived long lives while others lived relatively short lives. Some grave markers acknowledge military service. Other markers bear the name of the local community and perhaps indicate that the deceased were the area's earliest settlers. Yes, a cemetery is an intriguing place of mystery...or perhaps a place where certain mysteries can be solved.

While memories and mystery may accompany a cemetery, areas set apart for burying the dead are unique places of **Ministry**. A cemetery should foster a significant measure of respect. Some cultures have a high regard for a cemetery as sacred burial ground for ancestors. As a young boy, my dad encouraged me to walk around rather than over the graves in the cemetery because walking over a grave would be disrespectful. Throughout the years, I have maintained this posture of respect when walking through a cemetery.

Respect for a cemetery may be expressed through ongoing ministry that keeps grass cut, fence rows trimmed, ants exterminated, fallen tree limbs removed, graves leveled with additional dirt, and headstones straight. While many folks may tend to take cemetery maintenance for granted, caring for a church cemetery is a unique opportunity for ministry.

Against the backdrop of understanding the cemetery as a unique place of Memory, Mystery, and Ministry, please receive this edition of *Foundation News* as a primer concerning successful and perpetual care of your church cemetery. In addition, several church cemeteries and MBF-administered cemetery endowments are highlighted.



Daniel Hall

# Cemetery Endowment: Practical, Perpetual, Purposeful

In his leadership role as the Vice President/Director of Development for the Georgia Baptist Foundation, Douglas Couch traveled approximately 500,000 miles while visiting hundreds of Georgia Baptist churches during his fourteen-year ministry with the Foundation. While noting that most of the 3,400 churches that comprise the Georgia Baptist Convention are rural congregations, Couch also observed that most of these churches have and maintain cemeteries.

A review of U.S. Census Bureau data informed Couch that the number of Americans over the age of 65 would increase from 35 million in the year 2000 to over 80 million by 2050. The vast number of cemeteries associated with Baptist churches, coupled with the demographics of population growth and the "graying of America," led Couch to conclude that church cemeteries will experience increased activity in the years ahead. And, while most churches may have some funding available for the ongoing care and maintenance of their cemetery, likely these sources of funds are not sufficient to address future demands.

Couch's observations about the number of church cemeteries in Georgia led him to compile a resource entitled, "A Practical Guide for Church Cemeteries." Published by the Georgia Baptist Foundation, this booklet addresses a host of topics related to church cemeteries including legal issues, the formulation of guidelines and policies for administering a church cemetery, the provision of adequate financial resources, and the ongoing maintenance of the cemetery.

Here in Mississippi, approximately 2,100 Southern Baptist churches cooperate as ministry partners through the Mississippi Baptist Convention. And, similar to Georgia, many of these churches have cemeteries. According to unofficial and informal research, over 600 cemeteries are maintained by our Mississippi Baptist churches. The responsibility for cemetery oversight often is granted to a group of faithful servants who not only understand their assignment as a unique ministry opportunity, but who also labor tirelessly to ensure the proper administration and perpetual care of the cemetery.

From time-to-time, a member of a church cemetery committee will call the Mississippi Baptist Foundation asking about our services. Typically, the topic for discussion centers on approaches that the church (and the committee) can take to generate additional resources to finance the ongoing operations of the cemetery inasmuch as the interest earned on the cemetery fund is insufficient to cover all the expenses.

During my tenure at the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, I have learned that some churches/cemetery committees receive periodic offerings (5th Sundays) to help supplement the financial requirements for maintaining the cemetery. Other

churches encourage contributions on a per-burial plot basis. The solicitation of gifts at the church's annual "Homecoming" or "Cemetery Day" is the practice of some cemetery committees.

In Chapter 4 of Couch's book, he offered insights for providing adequate funding for the maintenance and improvement of the church cemetery. Couch stated, "Maintaining the cemetery

is a perpetual task that must be performed until Jesus comes again. Seems to me that a perpetual task needs a perpetual fund, therefore I highly recommend, endowment."

Couch continued with, "Let's try to grasp the advantages of the perpetual care endowment fund method vs. the unpredictable donation method. It is my ever so humble conviction that

the endowment fund method should be the ultimate goal of every church to maintain and improve their cemetery." Couch then presented the following rationale for his perspective on cemetery endowments:

- ✦ Once the perpetual fund is adequate to generate enough income cash flow to maintain the cemetery, there will never be any need to ask anyone to give another dime for cemetery maintenance. The cemetery will be self-supporting.
- ✦ This method frees up resources for other church ministry projects such as: International Missions, North American Missions, church buildings, Bible studies, evangelism and outreach ministries, student and children's ministries, etc.
- ✦ The older generation in the congregation feels secure that the cemetery will be taken care of and (they) will be more open to support young leaders with progressive ideas.
- ✦ With a properly maintained endowment fund, the church can enjoy a predictable income stream that is protected from inflation.

Currently, the Mississippi Baptist Foundation administers over 50 endowment funds that provide regular financial resources for the upkeep of church cemeteries. Recognizing that investing through the MBF can result in more income to operate the cemetery, while also providing the opportunity to maintain "purchasing power" of the endowment in order to offset the effects of inflation, churches and cemetery committees decide to transfer their current cemetery funds to the Foundation to manage on their behalf.

While some church cemetery endowments came to the Foundation through action of the local congregation, other cemetery funds were

presented to the MBF as a bequest through a Last Will and Testament. In addition, several of the cemetery endowments administered by the Foundation were initiated as outright gifts during the donor's lifetime.

"Maintaining the cemetery is a perpetual task that must be performed until Jesus comes again. Seems to me that a perpetual task needs a perpetual fund, therefore I highly recommend, endowment."

— Douglas Couch  
Vice President & Director of Development  
Georgia Baptist Foundation

"Let's try to grasp the advantages of the perpetual care endowment fund method vs. the unpredictable donation method. It is my ever so humble conviction that the endowment fund method should be the ultimate goal of every church to maintain and improve their cemetery."

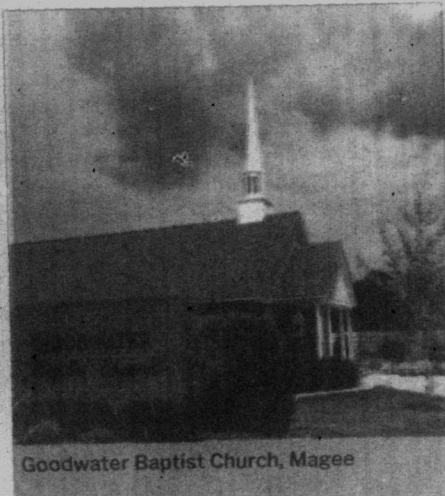
— Couch

## Magee

Willie Ainsworth was a faithful and supportive member of the Goodwater Baptist Church in Magee. Through Willie's generosity, the "Goodwater Baptist Church Cemetery" fund was established in 1965.

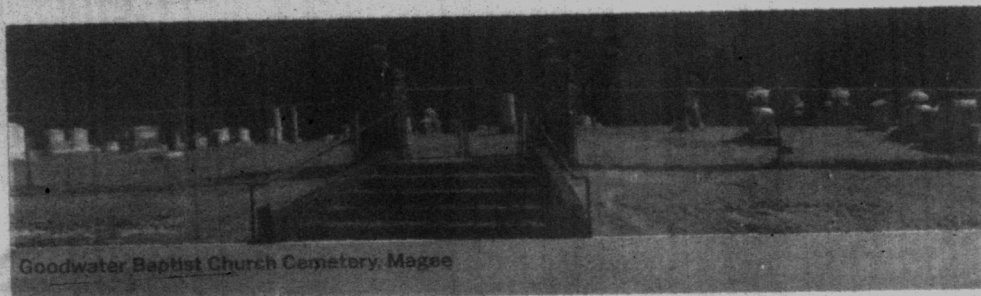


Willie Ainsworth



Goodwater Baptist Church, Magee

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation administers this fund. Although the Lord called Willie into "higher service" with Him in 2002, this endowment that she established will continue to provide financial blessing for the perpetual care of the Goodwater Baptist Church Cemetery.



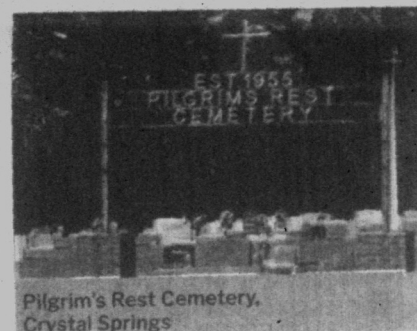
Goodwater Baptist Church Cemetery, Magee



Bethesda Baptist Church and Cemetery, Terry

## Terry, Crystal Springs

The Bethesda Baptist Church in Terry, MS, and the Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church in Crystal Springs, MS, both maintain cemeteries adjacent to the church building. Recognizing the opportunity to receive an increased level of income and the possibility of growing the value of the cemetery fund over time, both churches began utilizing the money-management services of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.



Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery, Crystal Springs

## Ethel

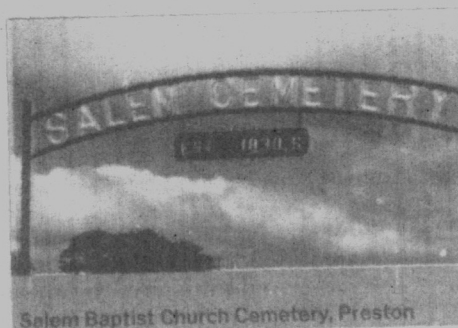
When Harvey J. McCool of Attala County passed away in 1972, verbiage in his Last Will and Testament expressed Mr. McCool's desire to provide financial blessings for the maintenance and care of the Doty Springs Baptist Church cemetery in Ethel, MS. To this end, the "H. J. McCool Cemetery Fund" was established through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. Although Harvey concluded his earthly sojourn over four decades ago, the proceeds from this endowment continue to provide supplemental resources for cemetery upkeep.



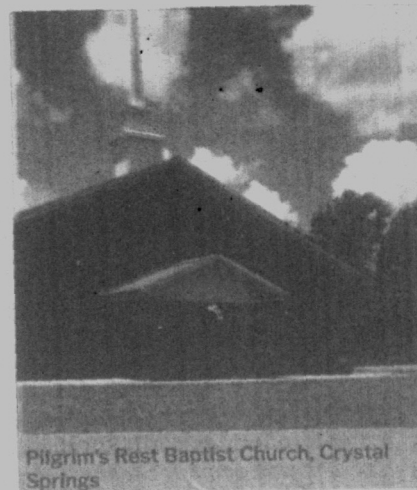
Doty Springs Cemetery, Ethel

## Preston

Madge Gully VanDevender provided perpetual financial resources for the Salem Baptist Church cemetery in Preston, MS. Since the establishment of this church cemetery endowment through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation in 2007, several additional contributions have been forthcoming as memorials to members of the Gully and VanDevender families.



Salem Baptist Church Cemetery, Preston



Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church, Crystal Springs

## Cemetery Enrichment: Finances, Future, Foundation

Although we may often focus on loss and sadness when visiting a cemetery, the gospel writers presented some "good news from the graveyard" when, as the women went to care for the body of Jesus on the first day of the week, an angel appeared to them and said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen ... just like he said."

The apostle Paul likewise sounded a positive note of hope and promise when he wrote to the church of Thessalonica these words, "The dead in Christ will rise first....to meet Him in the air." Until Christ's glorious return, however, caring for the church cemetery is an ongoing endeavor of Christian ministry. Be sure to thank those individuals who serve on the cemetery committee at your church.

Since 1943, the Mississippi Baptist Foundation has assisted individuals and churches across the state to include Kingdom stewardship in their financial planning and practice. The establishment of an endowment for ministerial education, missions, local church ministry, or the perpetual care of a cemetery are a few of the many ways whereby "trees can be planted for others to enjoy the shade."

The next time you see a cemetery in the distance while traveling, or "up close and personal" when attending the interment service of a friend or loved one, remember that the church cemetery is a unique place of Memory, Mystery, and Ministry. Your friends at the Mississippi Baptist Foundation look forward to coming alongside of the cemetery committee and your church as "laborers together with God" by helping to ensure adequate and perpetual funding for this important ministry.

## Recent performance

### MBF Equity Fund

5 years .....	9.05%
3 years .....	5.36%
1 year .....	13.02%
Quarter .....	6.33%

### MBF Fixed Income Fund

5 years .....	3.22%
3 years .....	3.48%
1 year .....	1.36%
Quarter .....	1.01%

### MBF General Endowment Fund

5 years .....	5.10%
3 years .....	4.20%
1 year .....	5.60%
Quarter .....	2.73%

### MBF Short Term Cash Fund Current rate = .70%



## Revivals & Homecomings

Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth: Start time for Sunday evening revival service on July 23 was incorrectly listed in last week's issue of The Baptist Record. The correct start time is 6:30 p.m.

- **Antioch Church, Brandon:** Homecoming, July 23, 10:30 a.m.; Gayden Harrell, speaker; Dennis Ellinburg, pastor.
- **New Henleyfield Church, Carriere:** Homecoming, July 30; 11 a.m.; followed by covered dish lunch. Ray Allen, speaker.
- **Calvary Church, Carroll Association:** Revival, July 23-26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Pender, speaker; Benny Rigby, worship leader.
- **Pleasant Hill Church, Mize:** Revival, July 23-26; James Messer, speaker; Perry Robbins, pastor.
- **Pleasant Hill Church, Bogue Chitto:** Homecoming, Aug. 6, 10 a.m.-noon, meal following service. Tim McCaffrey, speaker; Steve Bishop, worship leader.
- **Casey Greek Church, Baldwin:** Homecoming Revival, Aug. 18-20, Fri., 7 p.m.; Chester Harrison, speaker; Sat., 7 p.m., Don Lum, speaker; Sun., 10:30 a.m., Steve
- Stone, speaker. The Servants Quartet, worship leaders. Greg Smart, pastor.
- **Victory Church, Bassfield:** Revival, July 23-26, Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Dean Register, speaker; Wesley Lee, worship leader. Nathan Barber, pastor.
- **Wayside Church, Yalobusha Association:** Revival, July 16-18; Sun., 11 a.m. & 5 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m. Gary Tanner, speaker; Grayson Morrow, pianist. Rickey Harris, pastor.
- **Sardis Church, Smith Association:** Homecoming, 10:30 a.m., Aug. 6. James "Pete" Pearson, speaker; Ray "Pete" Ainsworth, worship leader; lunch followed by afternoon singing service featuring the Tal Vardaman family. Revival, Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m. Larry Dennis, speaker; Dale Townsend, worship leader.
- **Spring Hill Church, Waterford:** Revival, July 30-Aug. 2; Sun., 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m. John Parker, pastor.

## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# Archaeological discovery reaffirms Old Testament

**TEL GEZER, Israel (BP)** — The discovery of ancient human remains by Southwestern Seminary archaeologists has helped confirm Scripture's portrayal of the city of Gezer in southern Israel.

The discovery, unearthed this summer by Southwestern's Tandy Institute of Archaeology, included remains of two adults and a child inside a building that appeared to have been violently destroyed by Egyptians in the 13th century B.C., according to media reports.

Because the Egyptians in that period preferred to keep vanquished foes alive, "the heavy destruction suggests the Egyptian pharaoh encountered much resistance from the Gezerites," Southwestern archaeology professor Steven Ortiz told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

That level of resistance, Ortiz told Baptist Press, suggests Gezer was among the more powerful cities in southern Canaan during Israel's conquest of the Promised Land, as the biblical book of Joshua indicates. Egypt's destruction of the city occurred either during or immediately preceding the period of Israel's conquest, Ortiz said.

The new discovery "does fit in with what we know about Gezer in the biblical period," said Ortiz, professor of archaeology and biblical backgrounds and director of the Tandy Institute. "The King of Gezer apparently was one of the leaders [in the region]. In the conquest accounts, we have him organizing other Canaanite kings. So the biblical narrative has this memory of Gezer being an important city."



**BIG DISCOVERY** — Southwestern Seminary archaeologists unearth the remains of one of three humans this summer in the biblical city of Gezer. (BP photo courtesy of SWBTS)

## NOBTS to teach classes locally

**TERRY, Ms. (Special)** — New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) is offering Fall 2017 undergraduate seminary classes through Leavell College's Jackson Extension Center at Broadmoor Church in Madison.

The courses are accredited and priced affordably to allow local students to gain access to a high-quality seminary education without relocating. Through the Jackson Extension Center, students can obtain an associate in Christian ministry degree and/or a bachelor of arts in Christian ministry degree.

The seminary offers classes in a variety of formats that allows students to cater their schedule to meet their needs. Students can combine classes taken at the Jackson Extension Center

with online classes, workshops, conference-based courses, and hybrid courses to obtain the requirements needed for a degree.

Classes will meet on Mondays, starting August 21:

► **Old Testament Survey**, 1-4 p.m. (three hours credit). Instructor: Clint Ritchie, pastor of First Church in Yazoo City.

► **Introduction to Ministry**, 4-7 p.m. (three hours credit). Instructor: John Pace, pastor of First Church in Terry.

► **Survey of Church History**, 7-10 p.m. (three hours credit). Instructor: Matt Buckles, senior pastor of First Church, Vicksburg.

To view the cycle of classes as well as important information about the Jackson Extension Center, visit [nobts.edu/Extensions/LAMSCenters/Jackson.html](http://nobts.edu/Extensions/LAMSCenters/Jackson.html).

For more information and to begin the application and enrollment process, contact John Pace, Jackson Extension Center director, at cell, (601) 559-9352; church, (601) 878-5735; or via e-mail at [thepacepack@aol.com](mailto:thepacepack@aol.com). Web site: [nobts.edu](http://nobts.edu).

Norris Grubbs, regional dean for Louisiana and Mississippi, may be contacted at (800) NOBTS-01, ext. 3301, or via e-mail at [lnextasst@nobts.edu](mailto:lnextasst@nobts.edu).

The application and enrollment process may also be accessed at [nobts.edu](http://nobts.edu) by clicking on "Apply," then click on "Undergraduate Applications," then click on "Undergraduate Degree," and start the application process by providing the requested information.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing: no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330; E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with taste and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

JUNE 16-30

### HONOR

Mr. Perry Atherton	Mr. Carl Major Bennett Sr.
Mrs. Virginia H. Atherton	Mr. & Mrs. Herman L. Dungan
Ms. Joyce Bates	Ms. Hilma Faye Black
Mr. & Mrs. Krandall Howell	Elaine Gray-Sims
Ms. Cecelia Brister	Malinda Gray Rushing
Mr. & Mrs. Krandall Howell	Ms. Brenda Blye
Mr. & Mrs. Roy (Valerie) Fountain	Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith
Mr. Joseph L. Gotlin	Mr. Greg Bratton
Mr. Charles Ray	FBC Oxford
Mr. & Mrs. Krandall Howell	Ms. Aubrey Helen Brown
Bill and Senita Webb	Ms. Brenda Hughes & Family
Ms. Twila Rawson	Mr. Eugene Buckner
Mr. William B. Webb	Mr. & Mrs. Brooks E. Polk, Jr.
Mrs. Senita W. Webb	Mr. & Mrs. Curtis McNeil
	Mr. Ardis Cobb
	Dr. & Mrs. Dunbar McCurley
	Rev. Kent Hays Cochran
	Betty & Ronnie Crosby
	Ms. Mable Cochran
	Leann's Class, FBC McLain
	Mr. David Coleman
	Sr. Adult Men's SSC, Zion Hill
	FBC
	Mr. Keith Cooper
	Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith
	Mr. George H. Crawford, Jr.

JUNE 16-30

### MEMORIALS

Mrs. Frances Collier Abernethy	Mr. & Mrs. Sam H. Milton	Mr. & Mrs. Jim C. Milton	Mr. Thompson Barlow	Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Tillman	Terry Beckham	Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Coleman	Kelly-Long SSC, FBC Aberdeen	Mr. Sonny Gibson	Adult Class 5, Crossway Church	Ms. Karan A. Gordon	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander	Mrs. Charlie Hammond
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew	Mrs. Doris Harvill	Charles, Olivia & Trey Bridges	Ms. Wanda Head	Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith	Ms. Valeria Hickman	Ms. Marilyn Whitaker
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen D. Cook	Dr. James D. Hutchins	Mrs. Gwen Fortenberry	Mrs. Kathleen Jernigan	Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Persons	Mr. Bill Jones	Abby, Denise and Paul Roberts
Sam Kimbrell	Mr. & Mrs. Lamar Gordon	Mr. Robert Kolbe	Mr. & Mrs. Trent Smith	Weldon Kyle	Ladies Adult IV SSC, McCool FBC	Mr. & Mrs. Wilbur L. Brunt
Weldon "Shorty" Kyle	McCool FBC	Ms. Nancy Lamb	Mr. & Mrs. Krandall Howell	Mr. Jim Land	Mr. & Mrs. Rufus Warren	Ms. Wendy McKinney
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Rice	Rev. Wesley Miley	Mrs. Ruby T. Miley	Phyllis Murphy	Mr. & Mrs. Danny Withers	Dean Myers	Mr. & Mrs. Danny Withers
Ms. Sylvia Nanny	Mr. & Mrs. Don Evans	Mr. Robert Nunnery	Buddy Russell's SSC, Arlington	FBC	Mr. Ward Parker	Esther SSC, Magnolia FBC
Hattie Prewett	Mr. & Mrs. James Paul Robinson	Mr. Jeff Prince	Mr. & Mrs. Ted Skipper	Mrs. Kathryn Shivers	Ms. Joyce R. Hall	Ms. Beatrice Simmons
Mr. & Mrs. H. B. McKnight	Mrs. Wilma Singley	Mr. & Mrs. Herman L. Dungan				

Mrs. Dorothy Smith	Ms. Carole C. Lockwood	Mr. Pete Tyer
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Strickland	Mrs. Lyda Siddon Tavenner	Ms. Sandra S. Tipton
W. Smith	Ms. Joan S. Gordon	Mr. Shermon Walker
Mr. & Mrs. Danny Withers	Ms. Dot Taylor	Mr. & Mrs. Reese Douglas, Jr.
Mr. Bob Staten	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen D. Cook	Lois Brunel Walley
Mr. & Mrs. Carl F. DeLoach	Mrs. Yvonne Thaurman	Cindy Hatten
Mr. Jimmy D. Steele	Mr. & Mrs. Curtis L. Neil	Carla Osborne
Mr. Reggie Jones	Mr. Robert Glenn Tindall	Ms. Laura White
Mr. & Mrs. Hiram P. Whittington	Cadaretta Water Assn BOD	Siloam FBC
Mr. Thomas G. Talbert	Ms. Sara Townsend	Mrs. Opal R. Wood
	Mr. Reggie Jones	Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Persons

## SOCIAL SERVICES SECRETARY

The BCV has an immediate opening for an individual to fill the position of Social Services Secretary in the agency's headquarters in Ridgeland, MS. The individual filling this position must be a mature Christian adult with personal integrity, Christian character and a sound reputation. This individual must also have a demonstrated commitment to the ethical standards incumbent upon each staff member of the BCV staff and an appreciation of the confidentiality extended to children and families served by the BCV. This individual must be able to deal with children and adults in a warm, accepting manner. The successful candidate must have a minimum of an associate's degree or equivalent, and training and experience in secretarial tasks, and be proficient in general office computing tasks, specifically word processing, spreadsheet applications and data entry in various applications. Other significant responsibilities include phone coverage, extensive filing and significant interactions with members of the social service and clinical staff.

To apply for this position, complete an application found at <https://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com/about/careers-employment> and send it, along with a statement of faith and a resume copy to Kristen Slaven at 114 Marketridge Drive, Ridgeland, MS 39157 or to [kslaven@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:kslaven@baptistchildrensvillage.com).

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).

## His Love • Psalm 136

Way back when my little friend was only four, she would sing the words to 1 Chronicles 16:34. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His 'STEP-fast' love endures forever-*evvvv*ar." Without any training in the language of the Old Testament and a little slip of the tongue, she had perfectly described this deep, deep, abiding, unfathomable love of God. He is always "stepping fast" to come to the aid of His beloved children. Steadfast love is found only in our steadfast God Who is perfectly good. Verse by verse, Psalm 136 hammers home the beauty of this "step fast" love of God.

In the back of our hymnals is an index for responsive readings. I can remember my dad (my first and best pastor ever!) leading out with the "preacher part" of the Sunday morning reading. With our best precision as a congregation, we would respond together with the "people part" of the readings. Psalm 136 is arranged in responsive reading format.

Responsive readings did not, however, originate with our modern hymnal compilers. God told Moses in Deuteronomy 11 to make certain that the Israelites were to have a special worship service when they arrived in the Land of Promise. Joshua was instructed through Moses to set up two groups of "responsive readers." One

group would stand on Mt. Ebal while the other group would stand on Mt. Gerazim at Shechem. In Joshua 8, we see that this required ceremony of reciting the blessings and the cursings was carried out exactly as Moses had described.

There were no TV affiliates with global internet available to carry the program

live. God used the voices of the tribal leaders and the Levitical priests to make His Word known in an auditory/visual image to the (approximately two million) listeners standing below. The blessings for obedience were declared from Mt. Gerazim while the cursings for disobedience were declared from Mt. Ebal. After their recent crossing of the Jordan River and entering the Land of Promise, they were preparing to take the land and occupy it. Psalm 136 is reminiscent of the Ebal/Gerazim recitations.

Some have called Psalm 136 "the song that never ends." The love of God could

never be contained or expounded in one song. This Psalm contains 26 verses that reflect attributes and actions of God on behalf of His people. "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways," comes to mind as we move our eyes down the page. The acts of God on behalf of His people are reasons to respond in praise to Him. We are to praise God for Who He is and for what He has done.

Think of Psalm 136 as a circle. God and His great love are in the center of the circle. His attributes and actions are rays of light shining from the inside out. Even as they radiate from the center, they also are returned to Him in the form of praise and thanksgiving from worshippers.

God is good. God is the God of gods. (Big G, little g). God is the Lord of lords (Big L, little l). God alone does great wonders. He made the heavens with great skill. He spread out the earth above the waters. He made the great

lights, the sun by day and the moon and stars by night. God destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians. God brought the Israelites out of Egypt with His strong hand and His outstretched arm. He divided the Red Sea, making Israel to pass through its waters on dry ground while overthrowing Pharaoh and his army as the waters returned. God led Israel through the wilderness and helped them to destroy the great and mighty kings named Sihon, King of the Amorites and Og, King of Bashan. God gave land to Israel as their heritage. God remembered Israel and rescued them from their enemies. God provided food for the wilderness wanderers: manna, quail and water from a rock. The God of Israel is the God of heaven. He is more than worthy of our thanksgivings and praises.

Psalms like these recount the events of the history of the nation of Israel. Psalmists chronicled these acts of God in song/story form as well as through the repetition of responsive reading. Of course, these Psalms were inspired by the Holy Spirit. They helped preserve the unity of God's people. God is love.

Brown is staff evangelist, First Church, Richland.



### Explore the Bible

with Becky Brown

## A Fresh Start • John 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19

The late Jerry Bridges remarked: Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace. Can you relate? I can and I am sure that Peter could as well. In today's text, we see Peter undergo a grand transformation from one who was close enough to Jesus to touch him yet move to a position of denying Him three times. We know the embarrassment took its toll on Peter. The other gospel accounts all end this scene with Peter leaving and going off to "weep bitterly."

Peter had been rescued by Jesus, trained by Jesus and inspired by Jesus. Now the one who was willing to draw a weapon to defend Jesus (vs. 10) was denying any knowledge of Him. How does this happen? How can one that is so close to Jesus find himself so far removed from where he is meant to be? Further, why did it happen? Two simple questions were asked of Peter (vs. 17, 25). "Are you a follower?" Many people had "followed" Jesus and witnessed His miracles. No harm in admitting so. Peter was then approached by a relative of the man whose ear he had earlier cut off (vs. 26) and asked the same question. Was Peter fearful of being found out of raising the sword against the Temple leadership?

These issues were at play and Peter is at a loss. We might not have full disclosure of what Peter's thought process was but we can relate to his failure to represent Jesus and his need for a fresh start.

### Just like us - 18:15-18, 25-27

Admit it, each time we read of a Biblical character's failure, there is a tinge of our ego that thinks, "Not me." Surely you and I know better than Abraham, David or Peter. How could these people that lived so close to God make such horrible messes? Truth is I too have found myself denying a relationship with Jesus. Not just in my failures to speak up but also in my failures to love others or extend grace.

Peter had denied Jesus three times just as had been predicted. (13:38) Each of his denials were a simple reply to whether he was Jesus' follower: "I am not." Earlier in this chapter Jesus was

asked a series of questions to which He boldly answered in the affirmative: "I am." (vs. 4,6,8) How easy it would have been to simply say, "I am His follower." Sure facing an angry group of religious leaders bent on your punishment would have deterred Peter but for us today, what are we facing? Why is such a response from us just as difficult?

### Just like Jesus - 21:15-19

Peter had failed to understand Jesus' ultimate work in redemption. (13:7-8, 37-38) He was ready to take up arms to protect Jesus. On the

outside that appears to be an honorable trait and yet Peter follows outside bravery with inside fear as he denies Jesus. Where was his sword and quick temper at the courtyard fire? Peter failed. He failed in his understanding of Jesus' mission. He had failed in representing Jesus when given the chance. Again, from the outside

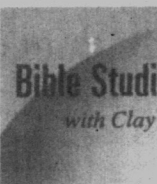
it looks as if Jesus' mission was in tatters as He is isolated by cowardly disciples.

Fast forward to post-Easter and who could blame Jesus for holding ill feelings towards Peter and the others? That would certainly make Jesus more like us but it is just like Jesus to be unlike us and restore Peter. Note in vs. 17 that Peter was hurt or "grieved" by Jesus' repeated questions of love. Peter was not offended by the questions, he was broken. He had denied Jesus and that was a terrible weight. The gracious Jesus had lifted that burden and Peter's response was tears.

### Live It Out

What a great lesson for us. We are guaranteed to fail in our Christian walk yet we hold a guarantee that Jesus holds out hope to us in grace. Yes, you and I have often made bold predictions of how we are going to live for Jesus just as Peter did (13:37) and failed miserably just as Peter did. As often as we fail, Jesus is quick to restore us. True, we need the grace of Jesus to save us from hell. We also need His grace to sustain, through everyday life.

Anthony is director of the Collaborative Missionary Network, Oxford/Holly Springs.



### Bible Studies for Life

with Clay Anthony

## MEDIA

cont. from p. 1

leaders, giving them His favor, and then I appealed to God to bring our nation together.

"Finally, I asked God to usher into our country a great sense of urgency, helping us to see that our greatest need as a nation is a spiritual movement of God," said Floyd, adding the experience was "quite humbling," Floyd said.

News of the prayer meeting went international last week when some participants posted photos on social media. The time of prayer capped a 15- to 20-minute visit with Trump at the end of a day-long meeting of the White House's Faith Leaders Initiative.

Jack Graham, another former SBC president and pastor of Prestonwood Church in Plano, Texas, who also attended the Oval Office meeting, described the Initiative as an informal working group that advises the White

House on issues of importance to evangelicals.

Graham said the July 10 meeting of the Faith Leaders Initiative was convened by the White House Office of Public Liaison to offer counsel from participants on issues ranging from religious liberty and the sanctity of life to U.S. relations with Israel.

Some national news media personalities were not impressed with the prayers for the president, and others were mystified by the laying on of hands.

Before going to a commercial break July 12 on her CNN show, Erin Burnett, host of Erin Burnett Out Front, said, "And next, a pretty stunning image. Let me just give you a quick peek of it. The president bowing his head in prayer in the Oval Office and all these people sort of touching him. It's very strange. We're going to tell you what happened there."

A July 16 article by Cleve R. Wootson Jr., in The Washington Post stated, "Laying hands on someone is a particularly intimate

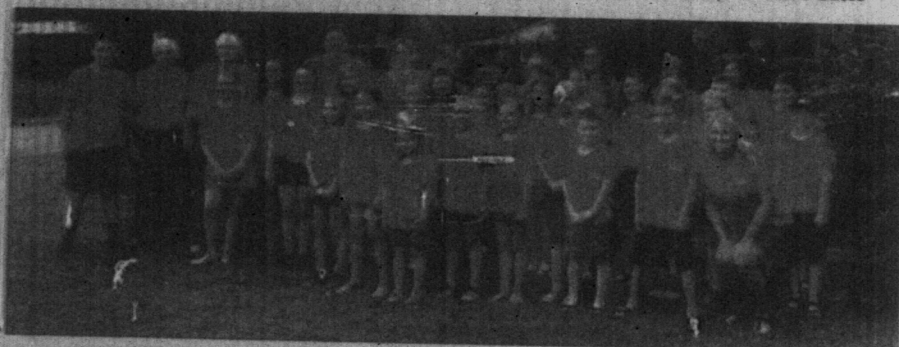
act for Evangelicals, communing with people and with God at the same time... But things start to get dodgy when the practice is brought out of the church and into, well, the Oval Office."

Floyd urged believers to do daily what the faith leaders were able to do publicly in the White House. "We need to rise up in our churches all over America, and Christians by the millions need to rise up and pray for our president, vice president, and the leaders of our nation."

## Just for the Record



**CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, held baby dedication on Mother's Day. Pictured (from left) are pastor Hal Hatten; Jeremy and Devon Winborne with Oaklyn Ross; Ronnye and Eric Hart with Matthew Owin; and Ryan and Karly Dyess with Gabriel Lee.



**FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, children recently attended summer camp at Shocco Springs in Alabama.

### In other Church News:

► **Immanuel Church, Magnolia**, will host an afternoon with Marvin Curtis Live on July 23, beginning at 3 p.m. Pot luck supper and fellowship will follow. Love offering will be taken.

► **New Salem Church, McCall Creek**, will host a Back to School Celebration on July 21, from 10 a.m.-noon. Event will include prayer, encouragement, games, snacks, and more. Jim Kultau, pastor.

► **New Zion Church, Walthall Association**, will present the latest version of the live drama, Heaven's Gates

and Hell's Flames on July 30-Aug. 1. The updated presentation includes topics and scenes relevant to today's homes and communities, with 4K tech-

nology and improved LED lighting. Not recommended for children under age nine. Admission is free. Love offering will be taken.

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